



## Discussion of Land Articles

At a special town meeting in May, Duxbury voters will have the opportunity to purchase 4.3 acres on Mayflower St., 11.06 acres of Union St., 4.76 acres on Summer St., and 354 acres of Camp Wing. The importance of the 3 smaller pieces should not be lost in our excitement over Camp Wing. They are the result of careful research and negotiation by the Conservation Commission. After evaluating a number of desirable parcels according to acquisition criteria in the Open Space and Recreation Plan, these were selected as being the best value for the price.

The Mayflower St. parcel was chosen primarily for its importance to water quality. It is centrally located in Zone A, the richest and most productive area of Duxbury's aquifer. Eight of the Town's 10 wells are located in Zone A and a future well site, already owned by the Water Department, adjoins the entire southern boundary of the Mayflower parcel. Driving down Mayflower St., it is easy to assume that the parcel belongs to the Town. It is a heavily wooded upland directly across from the Knapp Town Forest, abuts open space to the west, and is traversed by a trail used by hikers, joggers, and horseback riders. The owners would like to sell to the Town and have agreed to accept \$350,000, considerably less than the asking price. It will be a visual shock if we fail to protect this land and the preliminary plans for a 4-lot subdivision are realized.

The Union St. parcel is also important for several reasons. It fills in a missing corner of a 70 acre piece of conservation land, creating a significantly larger contiguous habitat for wildlife. Located in the western greenbelt, the parcel contains wetlands which drain into Keene's Brook and the South River. Most of the land is upland containing stands of birch and hemlock, species which are not commonly found in Duxbury. Although there is no frontage on the street, the land can be accessed via the adjoining conservation land; or for development, over the owner's street-front house lot. The agreed upon price of \$103,800 is a bargain at less than \$9,400 per acre.

The Summer St. parcel is most notable for the lovely vista it provides. With 800 feet of frontage on Route 53, its open fields and old barn foundations declare more eloquently than any road sign that you're not in Pembroke any more. This is exactly the sort of purchase that will "preserve the rural character of the Town", a goal supported by the results of the recent Strategic Plan survey. The parcel contains a small wetland thought to be the source of Keene's Brook. An old cow tunnel under the road, possible the only one in Eastern Massachusetts, is a unique historic feature of the property. The owners have agreed on a price of \$122,700 for the town because they want to see the land conserved.

All the lands to be considered at the May Town meeting, including Camp Wing which will be the subject of an article next week, have in common a reasonable price and an excellent chance for substantial reimbursement. This is the moment to renew our commitment to conservation and balance development with open space acquisition for the fiscal as well as environmental well-being of Duxbury.

If you want to help in any way with Friends of Conservation, contact us a PO Box 1528 or call Dot Baker (934-2302) or Kay Foster (934-2663).